

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a gas-discharge lamp, preferably such as a fluorescent lamp (10), wherein the lamp is operated at least in part with a dc voltage component, characterised in that voltage pulses are superimposed on the lamp dc voltage component.

2. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a gas-discharge lamp, preferably such as a fluorescent lamp (10), characterised in that the lamp is operated in the upper brightness range with dc voltage, with dc voltage and superimposed voltage pulses or with preferably a high-frequency ac voltage while it is operated in the lower brightness range with dc voltage and superimposed voltage pulses or only with voltage pulses.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 characterised in that the voltage pulses are sinusoidal and decaying.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 or 2 ~~one of claims 1 to 3~~ characterised in that the voltage pulses have a repetition rate of at least 100 Hz and a natural frequency which is higher than the repetition rate.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 characterised in that to reduce the brightness of the lamp the dc voltage component is reduced; ~~preferably to zero.~~

6. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or 2 characterised in that to reduce the brightness of the lamp the repetition rate of the voltage pulses is reduced.

7. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or 2 characterised in that to reduce the brightness of the lamp the voltage or the energy of the voltage pulses ~~is~~ are selectively reduced.

8. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or 2 characterised in that to reduce the brightness of the lamp the natural frequency of the voltage pulses is increased.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or 2 characterised in that the lamp is repeatedly subjected to a pole reversal.

10. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or 2 characterised in that the cathode of the lamp is heated, wherein the heating power is only selected to be so great that an increase in the heating power does not cause any further reduction in the running voltage of the lamp.

11. (Currently Amended) A power supply unit (11) for carrying out the method according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or 2 characterised in that there are provided or connected a running voltage source (13) for supplying the dc voltage and a pulse source (12) for supplying the voltage pulses ~~are provided or can be connected~~.

12. (Currently Amended) A power supply unit according to claim 11 characterised in that there are provided or connected means (15.1, 15.2) for heating the lamp electrodes (16.1, 16.2), means (17) for pole reversal of the lamp and/or means (14) for measuring the lamp running voltage ~~are provided or can be connected~~.

13. (New) A method according to claim 5, characterised in that the dc voltage component is reduced to zero.